

Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Road Inventory Review 2021 Summary

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources updates its forest road inventory on an annual basis which meets Public Act 288 legislative requirements and provides an opportunity to account for current road conditions. The DNR also encourages public involvement in the management of state forest roads, as well as incorporating staff input.

In 2018 the DNR launched an [online map](#) to provide an easy way for the public to interactively view forest roads and to submit comments on the management of those roads. This interactive web map has continued to be a useful tool throughout the 2021 road inventory cycle. As of Aug. 31, 2021, the public submitted 83 comments over the previous year. These comments were reviewed by DNR staff and considered as potential proposals for changes to the road inventory. All remaining changes were proposed by DNR staff as they worked to complete an inventory on the ground and refine the existing road data and/or respond to the impact of off-road vehicle use on state forest roads.

Detail of mileage

Changes in mileage can occur due to adding or deleting a road following field confirmation of what exists. This includes either extending or shortening a road segment, as well as data cleanup such as deleting duplicate segments from the map. A statewide summary of the proposed mileage changes includes the following:

- Total mileage of roads to be removed from the state forest road maps due to closure to conventional vehicles and ORVs: **9.3 miles**
 - Reasons for roads to be closed to conventional vehicles include environmental or resource protection.
- Total mileage of roads to delete due to data cleanup: **10.3 miles**
 - Examples of data cleanup include roads that do not exist on the ground; duplicate roads; data reconciliation.
- Total mileage of roads to add: **205.1 miles**
 - Added roads must be classified as either open to ORVs, closed to ORVs, or seasonally closed to ORVs. The mileage summary for each of these categories is as follows:
 - Added roads open to ORVs: **80.8 miles**
 - Reason for added roads open to ORVs include Boating Access Sites in the Upper Peninsula.
 - Added roads closed to ORVs: **8.3 miles**
 - Reason for roads closed to ORVs include resource protection, and existing land use orders of the DNR Director.

- Added roads seasonally closed to ORVs: **116 miles**
 - Reason for roads closed to ORVs seasonally: Road leads to a boating access site or public water access site, which is open to ORVs in the winter only to provide access to the ice in the Lower Peninsula.

In addition to actual road mileage being added or deleted, changes in road mileage open or closed to ORVs can also occur as a result of the ORV status on the existing road changing. Those changes are summarized as follows:

- Total mileage of roads to be changed from opened to closed to ORVs: **4.2 miles**
- Total mileage of roads to be changed from closed to ORVs to open: **98.5 miles**
 - Includes opening a portion of Camp Grayling military roads in the Northern Lower Peninsula to ORVs

Overall summary

When incorporating DNR staff refinements, as well as proposals that were initiated both by DNR staff and by comments submitted from members of the public, the overall mileage of state forest roads by region is as follows:

Upper Peninsula

- Total miles of state forest roads: **5,594 miles**
- Total miles of state forest roads open to ORVs: **5,497.9 miles**
- Total miles of state forest roads closed or seasonally closed to ORVs: **96.1 miles**
- Total percentage of roads open to ORV use: **98.3%**

While conducting the road inventory review over the past year, the DNR became aware of an issue that was artificially inflating the mileage of roads located in the U.P. This resulted in a report of mileage that was approximately 900 miles higher than the actual road mileage on the ground. After becoming aware of this issue, the data was corrected to accurately reflect the actual mileage of state forest roads across the U.P. Therefore, the overall mileage of roads in the U.P. has dropped by approximately 900 miles from what was previously reported. Please be aware that this mileage did not reflect actual miles of roads on the ground, so there has not been a loss of actual roads that are open to the public. This is simply a data correction to ensure accuracy.

Northern Lower Peninsula

- Total miles of state forest roads: **7,317.2 miles**
- Total miles of state forest roads open to ORVs: **6,205.1 miles**
- Total miles of state forest roads closed or seasonally closed to ORVs: **1,112.1 miles**
- Total percentage of roads open to ORV use: **84.8%**

Southern Lower Peninsula

- Total miles of state forest roads: **370.9 miles**
- Total miles of state forest roads open to ORVs: **9.4 miles**
- Total miles of state forest roads closed or seasonally closed to ORVs: **361.5 miles**
- Total percentage of roads open to ORV use: **2.5%**